

What Are You Thinking?

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Today I was mulling over how many students, supposedly dedicated to their art, seem to slip away because of completely understandable reasons. I'll address some of those reasons (and how to reframe them) in other articles. Today, I'd like to offer a bit on an overview.

What goes on in their heads? Usually it is a simple thought like "I don't have enough time to work, see my family and train." For "time" you can substitute "money" or "energy." Once the thought is formed, it is then dwelled upon. Once dwelled upon, it becomes truth. Once accepted as truth, it is never challenged, rather it has become objective reality. Logically, one does not oppose objective reality. **The problem is that it is neither objective nor reality.** It is an opinion born from a problem born from a conflict.

First one recognizes the conflict as a problem and then one tries to solve the problem. **When no easy solution presents itself, one accepts the problem as an insolvable fact of nature akin to gravity and mortality.** The normal way of processing the apparent conflict often ends up with martial arts dropped like heavy hot potatoes from the Tower of Pisa only to splat upon pavement below, deader'n a Renaissance recipe, never to be consumed again.

Needless to say, I think this is not only a grave mistake but also an unnecessary one. Let's revisit the scenario and address the initial thoughts differently. "I don't have enough time to work, see my family and train." Okay. This is stated as a fact. What if we rephrase it as a question? "Why don't I have enough time to work, see my family and train?" The question assumes the fact, however, so let's restate the question in a way that assumes a possible resolution. How about "How can I have enough time to work, see my family and train?" It already feels better, doesn't it? Now how about drawing on our creative resources and our ability to snatch potatoes from the maw of Pisa pavement. "How can I have time to work, see my family and train so that the benefits of training help both my family and my work?" Now we're cooking with potatoes!

You are creative enough to come up with some adjustments and solutions if only you assume there *are* adjustments and solutions. The new world didn't exist until someone thought it did. Potato soup, baked potato, mashed potatoes, French fries, and Italian roast potatoes didn't exist until someone thought of the recipe. Recipes are formulas; formulas solve problems; and it all starts with a positively phrased question.

What are *you* thinking?

Next week, we'll address the needs of non-martial artists by discussing How to Choose a Martial Arts School—it may seem a trite subject but I think you'll find it treated in a slightly unusual manner. Consider keeping a copy to distribute to prospective students.

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